

## ABSTRACT

An instant messaging communication system wherein users can obtain instant messaging at different terminal devices, in accordance with information they priorly store in a user defined terminal selection store in a unified instant messaging processor. The unified instant messaging processor also stores user preference data.

- 5 Data from users arrives at the unified instant messaging processor directly over the internet, while an instant messaging client communicates with the unified instant messaging processor through a presence and messaging processor. The data may include either message data or presence data, and a processor in the unified instant message processor determines the handling of the data, with reference to information
- 10 prior stored by a user, and enables appropriate formatting and routing of the information.